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**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

Applicant: RIJHSINGHANI, Anil G. and KONING, Paul G.  
Serial No: Not yet assigned  
Filed: Herewith  
For: NETWORK SWITCH WITH PANIC MODE

Examiner: Not yet assigned  
Art Unit: Not yet assigned

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**CERTIFICATE OF MAILING UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.8(a)**

The undersigned hereby certifies that this document is being placed in the United States mail with first-class postage attached, addressed to Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on the 9th day of October, 2001.

  
Signature

**BOX PATENT APPLICATION**  
Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Prior to examination on merits, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

**IN THE SPECIFICATION**

**Please insert the following paragraph beginning on page 11 at line 12 as follows:**

The switches 340, 350 and 360' each include spanning tree processing which implements a spanning tree protocol. The switches also include forward processing for forwarding received data communications. Switches 340 and 350 are shown to be conventional but could, if desired, be configured and programmed in accordance with the present invention, as will be described in detail below with reference to switch 360'.

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please cancel claim 1 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please add new claims 2-20 as follows:

2. (New) A method of handling traffic on a network node that is operative to receive, periodically, successive hello communications, the traffic including data communications, and the method comprising acts of:

- (A) detecting that a first number of successive hello communications have not been received at the network node; and
- (B) directing the network node to drop at least a portion of the traffic at the network node in response to act (A).

3. (New) The method of claim 2, wherein the traffic also comprises one or more hello communications, and act (B) comprises directing the network node to drop only the data communications included in the traffic such that the one or more hello communications included in the traffic are not dropped.

4. (New) The method of claim 2, wherein act (B) comprises directing the network node to drop all of the data communications included in the traffic.

5. (New) The method of claim 2, wherein a first user and a second user are connected to each other by a primary communications path and a redundant communications path, and the network node is operative to transmit traffic between the first user and the second user along the primary communications path and operative to refrain from transmitting traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path, and wherein the method further comprises acts of:

- (C) detecting that a second number of consecutive hello communications, including the first number of consecutive hello communications, have not been received at the network node; and
- (D) directing a transmission of the traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path in response to act (C).

6. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the network node is operative to receive a threshold amount of traffic, and wherein the method further comprises, prior to acts (A) and (B), acts of:

(C) determining that an amount of the traffic on the network node exceeds the threshold amount; and

(D) directing the network node to drop an amount of the traffic that exceeds the threshold amount.

7. (New) The method of claim 6, wherein a first user and a second user are connected to each other by a primary communications path and a redundant communications path, and the network node is operative to transmit traffic between the first user and the second user along the primary communications path and operative to refrain from transmitting traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path, and wherein the method further comprises acts of:

(E) detecting that a second number of consecutive hello communications, including the first number of consecutive hello communications, have not been received at the network node; and

(F) directing transmission of the traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path in response to act (E).

8. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the network node is a switch.

9. (New) A switch on a communications network for handling traffic, the switch operative to receive, periodically, successive hello communications and the switch comprising:

one or more ports to receive traffic at the switch, the traffic including data communications;

a detector to detect that a first number of successive hello communications have not been received at the switch; and

a processor to direct dropping at least a portion of the traffic in response to the detection.

10. (New) The switch of claim 9, wherein the traffic also comprises one or more hello communications, and the processor is further operative to direct dropping of only

the data communications included in the traffic such that the one or more hello communications included in the traffic are not dropped.

11. (New) The switch of claim 10, wherein the processor is further operative to direct dropping of all of the data communications included in the traffic.

12. (New) The switch of claim 9, wherein a first user and a second user are connected to each other by a primary communications path and a redundant communications path, and the switch is operative to transmit traffic between the first user and the second user along the primary communications path and operative to refrain from transmitting traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path,

wherein the detector is further operative to detect that a second number of consecutive hello communications, including the first number of consecutive hello communications, have not been received at the switch, and

wherein the processor is further operative to direct a transmission of the traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path in response to the detection of the second number.

13. (New) The switch of claim 9, wherein the switch is operative to receive a threshold amount of traffic, and

wherein the processor is further operative to determine that the amount of traffic at the switch, prior to detecting the first number, exceeds the threshold amount and to direct dropping an amount of the traffic that exceeds the threshold amount.

14. (New) The switch of claim 13, wherein a first user and a second user are connected to each other by a primary communications path and a redundant communications path, and the switch is operative to transmit traffic between the first user and the second user along the primary communications path and operative to refrain from transmitting traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path,

wherein the detector is further operative to detect that a second number of consecutive hello communications, including the first number of consecutive hello communications, have not been received at the switch, and

wherein the processor is further operative to direct a transmission of the traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path in response to the detection of the second number.

15. (New) A switch on a communications network for handling traffic, the switch operative to receive, periodically, successive hello communications and the switch comprising:

one or more ports to receive traffic at the switch, the traffic including data communications;

a detector to detect that a first number of successive hello communications have not been received at the switch; and

means for directing a dropping of at least a portion of the traffic in response to the detection.

16. (New) The switch of claim 15, wherein the traffic also comprises one or more hello communications, and wherein the means for directing comprises means for directing the switch to drop only the data communications included in the traffic such that the one or more hello communications included in the traffic are not dropped.

17. (New) The switch of claim 16, wherein the means for directing comprises means for directing the switch to drop all of the data communications included in the traffic.

18. (New) The switch of claim 15, wherein a first user and a second user are connected to each other by a primary communications path and a redundant communications path, and the switch is operative to transmit traffic between the first user and the second user along the primary communications path and operative to refrain from transmitting traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path,

wherein the detector is further operative to detect that a second number of consecutive hello communications, including the first number of consecutive hello communications, have not been received at the switch, and the switch further comprises:

means for directing a transmission of the traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path in response the detection of the second number.

19. (New) The switch of claim 15, wherein the switch is operative to receive a threshold amount of traffic, and the switch further comprises:

means for determining that an amount of the traffic on the switch, prior to detecting the first number, exceeds the threshold amount; and

means for directing the switch to drop an amount of the traffic that exceeds the threshold amount.

20. (New) The switch of claim 19, wherein a first user and a second user are connected to each other by a primary communications path and a redundant communications path, and the switch is operative to transmit traffic between the first user and the second user along the primary communications path and operative to refrain from transmitting traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path, and

wherein the detector is further operative to detect that a second number of consecutive hello communications, including the first number of consecutive hello communications, have not been received at the switch, and wherein the switch further comprises:

means for directing a transmission of the traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path in response to the detection of the second number.

**REMARKS**

It is respectfully requested that the foregoing Preliminary Amendment be entered prior to examination of the application, to place the application in better condition for examination and allowance.


Applicant proposes changes to the written description of the specification to correct minor typographical errors, as shown in the document attached hereto entitled "Marked-Up Written Description of the Specification." The Examiner is respectfully requested to approve these proposed changes.

By this amendment, Applicant cancels claim 1 without prejudice or disclaimer and adds claims 2-20. As a result, claims 2-20 remain pending in the application, with claims 2, 9, and 15 being independent.

It is respectfully submitted that all of the claims that remain pending in the application are in condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable consideration is hereby requested.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicants hereby request any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No.: 23/2825.

Respectfully submitted,  
***RIJHSINGHANI, Anil G et al, Applicants***



Daniel P. McLoughlin, Reg. No. 46,066  
Wolf, Greenfield & Sacks, P.C.  
600 Atlantic Avenue  
Boston, Massachusetts 02210-2211  
Tel. No.: (617) 720-3500  
Attorney's for Applicant(s)

Docket No. E0378/7949/JHM/DPM  
Date: October 9, 2001  
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**MARKED-UP WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFICATION**

**Please insert the following paragraph beginning on page 11 at line 12 as follows:**

The switches 340, 350 and 360' each include spanning tree processing which implements a spanning tree protocol. The switches also include forward processing for forwarding received data communications. Switches 340 and 350 are shown to be conventional but could, if desired, be configured and programmed in accordance with the present invention, as will be described in detail below with reference to switch 360'.